Law Enforcement's Information Sharing Infrastructure: A National Assessment

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Abstract
The September 11th attacks impacted society generally, and law enforcement specifically, in dramatic ways. One of the major trends has been changing expectations regarding criminal intelligence practices among state, local, and tribal (SLT) law enforcement agencies, and the need to coordinate intelligence efforts and share information at all levels of government. In fact, enhancing intelligence efforts has emerged as a critical issue for the prevention of all threats and crimes. To date, an increasing number of SLT law enforcement agencies have expanded their intelligence capacity and there have been fundamental changes in the national, state, and local information sharing infrastructure. Moreover, critical to these expanding information sharing expectations is the institutionalization of fusion centers. Despite these dramatic changes, an expanding role, and the acknowledgement that local law enforcement intelligence is critical to the prevention and deterrence of threats and crimes, very little research exists that highlights issues related to the intelligence practices of SLT law enforcement agencies and fusion centers.[1] This research describes what agencies are doing to build an intelligence capacity and assesses the state of information sharing among agencies. Specifically, a national survey was developed to examine the experiences of SLT agencies and fusion centers for building an intelligence capacity as well as to understand critical gaps in the sharing of information regarding intelligence.

Keywords:
Intelligence-led policing, Law enforcement intelligence, Information sharing, Infrastructure

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Law Enforcement's Information Sharing Infrastructure: A National Assessment[2]

INTRODUCTION

This research describes what U.S. law enforcement agencies are doing to build an intelligence capacity and assesses the state of information sharing among agencies. Specifically, a national survey was developed to examine the experiences of state, local, and tribal (SLT) law enforcement agencies and fusion centers for building an intelligence capacity as well as to understand critical gaps in the sharing of information regarding intelligence. Although the federal government has provided support to build an intelligence infrastructure to more effectively respond to terrorism, there has been virtually no empirical work that describes the major issues and obstacles faced by SLT law enforcement agencies and fusion centers on intelligence-related issues. More specifically, this study seeks to explore the working relationships among law enforcement and other organizations, law enforcement's awareness of threats and key mandates to prevent or mitigate those threats, and their operational knowledge of the emerging intelligence-led policing philosophy. This study is a critical first step in documenting the status of the progress made accomplishing key intelligence goals, and we believe this study contributes to the knowledge of and literature pertaining to law enforcement intelligence practices in the United States.

RELEVANT LITERATURE

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This research draws upon two primary fields of theory to guide the present study. First, as commonplace within discussions of police innovation, a brief discussion of organizational change will be presented to provide context. Law enforcement intelligence is the current innovation among American police agencies and the philosophy by which police implement these practices is through intelligence-led policing. Second, as the primary focus of this research is to present a national snapshot of law enforcement intelligence practices in the U.S. as they demonstrate a movement toward the adoption of this innovation, an in-depth discussion of contemporary intelligence mandates and research is provided.

ORGANIZATIONAL INNOVATION FRAMEWORK

Intelligence-led policing shares a similar conceptual foundation to community policing in that the relationship between the two philosophies is based on the use of community policing as a mechanism that enhances intelligence-led policing via two-way information flow between police and the community (Carter & Carter, 2009). Such a foundation is helpful when exploring the adoption of law enforcement intelligence practices in the United States as policing scholars have established a solid literature on the impact of innovations on police organizations and the manner in which they are adopted (King, 1998, 2000; Morabito, 2010; Weisburd & Braga, 2006). This collective knowledge helps to inform the present study by providing a theoretical understanding of what is to be discussed. It should be noted that despite common similarities, community and intelligence-led policing are different philosophies designed to achieve different results.

Community policing is largely focused within the specific jurisdiction of the law enforcement agency and emphasizes community partnerships, organizational decentralization, and a problem solving orientation. Whereas intelligence-led policing may also emphasize “within jurisdiction”

crime problems, the focus of ILP tends to shift to regional, national and even transnational risks and threats. Whereas community policing emphasizes community input into determining localized priorities, ILP seeks community input in terms of tips and leads and seeks to integrate or fuse such intelligence with other sources of information about emerging threats. Advocates of both community policing and intelligence led policing have called for organizational transformation to institutionalize these innovations, though the history of community policing has suggested such organizational change has been difficult to achieve (Greene, 2004).

Consistent with institutional systems theory and organizational learning is the ambiguity of what adoption actually constitutes. Institutional theory posits police agencies will label themselves as being innovative and consistent with emerging practiceslargely independent of actual organizational change. This phenomenon is consistently examined in the community policing literature (Crank, 1994; Wilson, 2006; Wilson & Kelling, 1982). Many agencies indicate they have adopted community policing and are actively engaged in the appropriate practices. However when their practices and programs are examined more closely it becomes apparent that community policing in the agency is often "window dressing" and an attempt to regain legitimacy in the eyes of their peers and those they serve (Crank, 2003; Greene, 2004). Intelligence-led policing is predicted to follow similar patterns. Indeed, Burress, Giblin and Schafer's (2010: 95) study of homeland security practices in Illinois found that "Institutional pressures, such as professional and government publications, training, professional associations, and the actions of peer agencies, significantly influenced municipal and county agencies." Indeed, these forces were much more predictive than levels of funding to support these practices. Similarly, Giblin's (2006) study of the adoption of crime analysis found that while contingency factors such as population played a role, institutional factors such as accreditation were more

predictive of the adoption than were demand factors such as crime rates. Thus, intelligence-led policing is expected to follow a similar path with respect to ambiguous adoptions, varying implementation, and "window dressing" applications (Chappell, 2009). Similarly, organizational learning theorists posit that organizations often mistake talking about change for change actually occurring (Pfeffer & Sutton, 2000). To begin, it must be established that intelligence-led policing constitutes an innovation among American police agencies. In an effort to demonstrate the extent to which agencies are engaged in intelligence-led policing, the present study assesses the extent to which law enforcement is engaged in law enforcement intelligences practices and their perception of these practices.

INTELLIGENCE-LED POLICING AS INNOVATION

Literature on police innovation has leaned on the standard requirement that an innovation must be "state-of-the-art" (King, 2000). How policing scholars have gone about ascertaining if a program or technology was "state-of-the-art" is somewhat ambiguous and inconsistent. Methods used by scholars to identify police innovations thus far have included reviews of scholarly literature (Zhao *et al*., 1995), law enforcement panel interviews (Spelman *et al.*, 1992), and surveys (King, 1998; Moore *et al.*, 1996). Other scholars have broadly labeled innovation as something new for the policing agency, but without explaining how or why the innovations were actually "new" (Mullen, 1996; Weiss, 1997). Intelligence-led policing can be categorized as an innovation by following similar steps.

Much of the literature related to the emergence of intelligence-led policing falls within the homeland security arena. Authors typically merge the two concepts, taking the position that intelligence-led policing is a function of homeland security (Oliver, 2006, 2009; Schafer *et al.*,

2009). Such a position is correct, but this is true for many facets of law enforcement and preparedness with the litany of homeland security responsibilities as tasked by the federal government. As such, it is more appropriate to focus on literature and recommendations specific to intelligence-led policing to solidify the "state-of-the-art" of the concept. In March 2002, more than 120 criminal intelligence experts from across the U.S. gathered for an "Intelligence Summit" hosted by the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP). At this summit, law enforcement professionals expressed frustration in the lack of guidance from the government as to how intelligence-led policing should be defined and put into practice. Specifically, one of the core recommendations was to "promote intelligence-led policing through a common understanding of criminal intelligence and its usefulness" (International Association of Chiefs of Police, 2002:v). Ratcliffe (2005) reaffirmed this frustration among police practitioners in New Zealand that while very excited about the potential benefits of the intelligence-led philosophy, found it difficult to adopt as a result of a lack of consistent understanding of the new concept. As a result, the Global Intelligence Working Group was created and their first product was the *National Criminal Intelligence Sharing Plan* (NCISP) that stated "all agencies, regardless of size, must have a minimal criminal intelligence sharing capability" (Global Intelligence Working Group, 2003:iii).

Enhancing the utility of intelligence-led policing was the creation of fusion centers. There are currently 72 official fusion centers in the U.S. (Carter *et al*., 2012) to increase the exchange of information and data across government and private sectors to enhance law enforcement's ability to fight crime and terrorism and prevent threats (Global Intelligence Working Group, 2005; McGarrell *et al.*, 2007). The relationship between intelligence-led policing and fusion centers is reinforced by the Office of Homeland Security's *National Strategy*

for Homeland Security that identifies the philosophy as one of the primary tools to combat terrorism and threats to the U.S (Homeland Security Council, 2007). Fusion centers increase the production and sharing of crime and intelligence analysis products. Manning (2001) suggested that crime analysis is a step in the right direction for policing, but that it lacks the actual analytic component to inform decision making – intelligence-led policing serves as the vehicle by which informed decision making can result from the utilization of analytic products. Ratcliffe (2002) went on to note that intelligence-led policing is a new tactic relying on crime analysis that can rapidly improve police processes and management. Lastly, academics (Carter and Carter, 2009; Ratcliffe & Guidetti, 2008; Scheider *et al.*, 2009) and practitioners (Bureau of Justice Assistance, 2005; Guidetti & Martinelli, 2009) alike agree that intelligence-led policing is not only new to policing, but so new in fact that it requires a shift in police management, organizational structure, and even day-to-day operations. Furthermore, Scheider *et al* (2009) specifically identified intelligence-led policing as an innovation within policing and that while it is new to law enforcement, the lessons learned from previous policing innovations are critical to successful adoption.

As mentioned, the NCISP was created by the *Global Intelligence Working Group* (GIWG) to provide law enforcement agencies with the necessary resources to develop, gather, access, receive, and share intelligence. To this end, the plan established a number of national standards that have been formally recognized by the professional law enforcement community as the proper role and processes for the contemporary application of law enforcement intelligence (Carter, 2009). Within the NCISP was the formal call for American law enforcement agencies to adopt intelligence-led policing. However, this recommendation lacked guidance for adopting this new philosophy and evaluating progress. This lack of guidance without some basic idea of

how intelligence is being integrated into law enforcement agencies and the mechanisms by which these agencies share information inhibits researchers from exploring the intelligence-led policing philosophy. A successful intelligence-led philosophy can be determined through the effectiveness of state, local, and tribal law enforcement agencies' ability to collect, analyze, disseminate, and integrate intelligence into the operations of the organization.

A challenge exists in that there are differing views of the intelligence-led policing concept and its application, yet there remains a movement toward the adoption of intelligence-led policing without a universally accepted definition or operational philosophy (Bureau of Justice Assistance, 2010). Intelligence-led policing, like community policing, must be tailored to the characteristics of each individual agency. As such, the approach must be created through an inclusive development process that ensures it is in concert with an agency's goals and functions, its capabilities, and the characteristics of both the agency and the jurisdiction it serves. Like all police innovations and change, obstacles will be prevalent with this philosophical shift (Weisburd *et al*., 1993). While there is no universally accepted definition of intelligence-led policing, the following definition perhaps best illustrates the conceptualization of the philosophy:

> "The collection and analysis of information related to crime and conditions that contribute to crime, resulting in an actionable intelligence product intended to aid law enforcement in developing tactical responses to threats and/or strategic planning related to emerging or changing threats (Carter & Carter, 2009, p.317)."

As mentioned, intelligence-led policing shares a similar struggle that community-policing encountered in the early 1990s. There was such a high degree of ambiguity as to what community policing actually was that agencies were not sure how to integrate it within the existing policing function. This is largely a result of such a wide variance with respect to the

needs and priorities of American law enforcement agencies. As such, new innovations will be adopted differently across police organizations with acceptable degrees of variance (Greenberg et al., 2001). Simply put, organizations are structured different, have different responsibilities, and different demands – therefore the manner in which they adopt new programs should vary due to these differences. While the NCISP states all agencies, regardless of size, must have an intelligence-led policing capability, there is no common denominator as to what an intelligence-led policing capability constitutes for agencies of different size and responsibility. Moreover, there is very little research as to how agencies of different sizes have attempted to respond to this requirement. The survey results presented here begin to fill this gap.

Intuition might assume that larger policy agencies should have a more comprehensive intelligence capacity than smaller agencies. In contrast to this assumption, agency size has not been found to help explain law enforcement intelligence practices (Carter, 2011). An agency's intelligence-led policing capability need only be as advanced as the responsibilities that agency requires. The New York Police Department will have a significantly different intelligence-led policing capability than that of a rural department with less than five sworn officers. While this is a crude example, it serves to point out the fundamental difference. Rather than being fixated on the label "intelligence-led policing", practitioners and academics alike need to be concerned first with understanding with the intelligence practices that our occurring within agencies and how the greater law enforcement intelligence landscape is evolving. In short, there is a pressing concern for research which begins to establish what intelligence-related practices law enforcement has implemented to give an accurate reflection of adoption.

LAW ENFORCEMENT INTELLIGENCE

Since the terrorist attacks of September 11th, there has been a considerable investment of resources in many different government sectors to better prepare, respond, and recover from terrorist attacks. One critical investment area has been in improving the law enforcement intelligence capacity at all levels of government. Following the September 11th attacks, and more specifically following the March 2002 International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) and Office for Community-Oriented Policing Services (COPS) Intelligence Summit, it was recognized that to provide an effective and comprehensive barrier to future terrorist attacks, law enforcement agencies had to re-engineer their current intelligence capacity and, in many cases, they had to build an intelligence capacity from the ground up. The concept and application of law enforcement intelligence was beginning a metamorphosis at that time, driven by new concepts and standards, initiated largely by the Global Intelligence Working Group (GIWG) and the Criminal Intelligence Coordinating Council (CICC).[2] New resources and training opportunities were becoming available and change was occurring comparatively fast. Among the challenges were that agencies were having difficulty implementing the changes, both conceptually and from a staffing perspective. In addition, the number of Joint Terrorism Task Forces (JTTF) has increased dramatically since 9/11 which, even though they are primarily investigative bodies, utilize the products of the intelligence process as well as aid in collecting information that meets intelligence requirements.

The development of state and major urban area fusion centers has also had a significant effect on intelligence production and information sharing (Cooney, Rojek & Kaminski, 2011). While the 72 officially recognized fusion centers are under the control of their respective state or local jurisdiction, they comply with federal standards, serve as a clearinghouse of information for the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and generally provide opportunities for federal,

state, and local law enforcement to share and disseminate information about terrorism, criminal threats, and natural disasters. Furthermore, DHS identified minimal standards for law enforcement and fusion centers to engage in information sharing for the prevention of threats in the *Target Capabilities List* (U. S. Department of Homeland Security, 2007). This list of minimal capabilities serves as another key guideline by which SLT law enforcement agencies are to successfully engage in information sharing for prevention efforts. Finally, the *Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevent Act of 2004* mandates that the President establish an Information Sharing Environment (ISE). The implementation plan for this ISE, which was released in November 2006, states that:

> "This environment will create a powerful national capability to share, search, and analyze terrorism information across jurisdictional boundaries and provide a distributed, secure, and trusted environment for transforming data into actionable information. The resulting environment will also recognize and leverage the vital roles played by State and major urban area information fusion centers, which represent crucial investments toward improving the nation's counterterrorism capacity" (p. xiv).

While there has been a significant void in empirical research that attempts to examine issues related to information sharing among law enforcement agencies, there is some work that has examined fusion centers specifically or the links between fusion centers and individual departments in a particular state (see Cooney *et al*. 2011; Graphia-Joyal 2010; Ratcliffe & Walden 2010; Saari, 2010). There is also some work that provides a general understanding of intelligence issues, but there is little work that is national in focus.

First, the Government Accountability Office (2003) reviewed critical documents related to information sharing, interviewed officials from various agencies, and surveyed 29 federal law

enforcement agencies, all 50 homeland security offices, all cities with a population of 100,000 or greater (N=485), and a random sample of smaller cities (N=242). The surveys were sent to the mayor who either completed the survey or delegated the completion to the chief of police, an assistant, or other emergency management personnel. There were many important findings highlighted in this report, but several concern information sharing limitations. Among these findings were that:

1) Officials from federal, state, and local governments do not think the process of sharing information is "effective" or "very effective;"

2) They do not routinely receive the information they need to protect the homeland;

3) The information received is not timely;

4) Opportunities are routinely missed to obtain and provide information to the federal government; and

5) Law enforcement agencies are not receiving the types of information they need to effectively prevent terrorist attacks.

Importantly, it should be noted that when these data were collected in 2003 when virtually none of the currently available information sharing tools were in place, including fusion centers.

The RAND Corporation has conducted two national surveys related to domestic preparedness and intelligence (Riley & Hoffman, 1995; Riley, Treverton, Wilson, & Davis, 2005). The 1995 survey focused on preparedness issues for state and local law enforcement. The important conclusion of the study was that there was very little intelligence and strategic assessment capability and poor information sharing between federal and state law enforcement officials – findings that mirrored those of the more widely noted report published in 2004 by the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States (9/11 Commission Report).

Of course, the significant changes that were produced in the post-9/11 era, largely under GIWG leadership, were intended to address these problems.

Prior to the establishment of the Department of Homeland Security, RAND did a second survey and several case studies to examine issues related to local and state intelligence efforts. This study concluded that SLT law enforcement agencies have played an increasingly important role in responding to and preventing terrorism. Law enforcement agencies wanted better information sharing, needed improvements in communication interoperability, and thought that training improvements were necessary (Riley, *et al*., 2005). In addition, even small agencies, if assessing their threat risk as high, were very proactive in focusing their preparedness efforts.

Recently, the Homeland Security Policy Institute published a research brief that highlighted the results of a survey that was administered to individuals attending the Intelligence Unit Commanders Group of the Major Cities Chiefs Association (Cilluffo, Clark & Downing, 2011). Forty-two surveys were completed. Several of the findings highlighted in the research brief relate to the issues examined in the study presented here. First, they found that all respondents had a working relationship with their local fusion center, and the respondents thought there was value in maintaining that relationship. This finding is consistent with state-level research that finds that local law enforcement agencies are generally supportive of fusion center activities (Cooney *et al*., 2011). Second, the respondents were willing to share information through key channels, such as the Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI) National Data Exchange (N-Dex) and the Bureau of Justice Assistance Nationwide Suspicious Activity Reporting Initiative (NSI) Program Manager's Office. Third, they noted that law enforcement preferred to share information locally first, then regionally, and then finally federally. Fourth,

the respondents indicated that their best source of terrorism information was the FBI's Joint Terrorism Task Forces followed by the local fusion centers.

Another contemporary survey involved over 1,800 law enforcement executives (Anarumo, 2011). This survey found there were strong regional patterns in terms of perceived threat groups. For example, Islamist groups were rated the most feared threat groups by law enforcement executives in the northeast, south, and southwest. However, law enforcement executives in the west rated eco-terrorists as the most feared group and right wing groups were considered were feared more by executives in the central and southwest regions in comparison to other regions. The findings supported the conclusion that terrorism risk is a local phenomenon and that the "identification of the local terrorist threat is the foundation of effective anti-terrorism strategy development (2011:76)."

Although it is generally understood that intelligence must be shared widely, there has been very little empirical research that documents what steps law enforcement agencies have taken to build an intelligence capacity as well as efforts and obstacles related to information sharing. The studies discussed above provide valuable background information and highlight some of the key obstacles in effectively using state and local intelligence. However, the GAO (2003) study does not specifically focus on law enforcement efforts and the RAND studies were conducted prior to the establishment of the Department of Homeland Security and before the GIWG had issued any of its standards, recommendations or best practices. The field of intelligence has changed incredibly since the RAND study in 2005, and it is important to examine current issues specific to law enforcement efforts in the area of intelligence.

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

The research team conducted a national survey of law enforcement intelligence practices with two different samples of key personnel. The first survey sample consisted of state and local law enforcement officers and other individuals charged with building an intelligence capacity for individual agencies. The second sample consisted of personnel from state fusion centers that have been involved in the development of the intelligence infrastructure in states and major urban areas.

SURVEYS OF KEY PERSONNEL

In order to provide an overview of the major issues facing law enforcement agencies and fusion centers, the research team distributed questionnaires via a web-designed survey to two groups of law enforcement personnel. The first group included individuals who had attended a national training program funded by the Department of Homeland Security. Individuals selected to attend this training program were typically selected by their agency to lead the efforts to develop or re-engineer their agency's intelligence capacity. Most had little previous experience in law enforcement intelligence and were seeking guidance, through the training, on how to develop their agency's intelligence capacity. This sampling strategy, which includes personnel from significantly different sized police agencies in all geographic regions of the country, was chosen for three reasons. First, in attending this training, these officers were identified by their respective SLT agency as a representative of the intelligence function within the agency. Second, as a result of their selection on behalf of their agency, this sample includes law enforcement personnel who have a working understanding of key issues tied to building an intelligence capacity, and thus will be able to address specifically the problems with putting knowledge into practice. Third, their awareness of the contemporary intelligence structures,

requirements, and formal communication networks increases the likelihood that they will have direct knowledge about the strengths and weaknesses of these issues.

The second sample group was comprised of persons who attended the 2007 and 2008 National Fusion Center Conferences (NFCC). The NFCC is sponsored by the leading law enforcement intelligence organizations and is considered to be the prominent gathering of key personnel from each fusion center in the United States.[3] Attendees of the NFCC include fusion center directors, operational personnel, and intelligence analysts. The research team decided to survey the participants at these conferences rather than sending surveys directly to fusion centers for two reasons. First, participants in the conference will not only be fusion center staff (including possibly having multiple respondents from the same center), but include others from various levels of government and a range of key disciplines. Thus, the research team assumed the sample would include a broad range of individuals critical to effective intelligence practices in the United States. Second, the research team assumed that since most fusion centers would send multiple personnel, there would be multiple indicators on key measures for each fusion center.

The intent behind the decision to administer a web-based survey instead of a mail survey was to simplify the response process for informants and to reliably capture the data they submitted. A group of state, local, and tribal law enforcement intelligence leaders served as subject matter experts and scrutinized preliminary survey drafts. A separate group of law enforcement officials then took part in a pretest of both surveys to identify ambiguous or poorly worded questions, issues that were overlooked, and items that could be potentially difficult to answer correctly. The final drafts consisted of 103 (law enforcement survey) and 125 (fusion center survey) structured, semi-structured, or open-ended questions. Although the survey

instruments were long, the research team opted for breadth and providing opportunities for the respondents to engage a variety of critical intelligence issues. In general, the surveys captured their intelligence experiences, issues related to information sharing, and strategies that could promote better information sharing. The research team also collected several indicators on the type of agency, role of intelligence in the agency, and characteristics of the respondent.

The surveys were administered using software that is ideal for web-based survey design and data collection. Prior to the data collection phase, it was necessary to ensure no individuals appeared in both sampling frames and that addresses we had on file remained valid. Although there was little overlap between the samples, we received a considerable number of automated server notifications telling us that the source addresses were no longer valid. We eliminated that addresses from the sampling frame. In early June 2009 an e-mail was sent to each addressee outlining the purpose of the study and inviting them to complete a self-administered online questionnaire. As e-mail replies and survey submissions appeared, the research team readjusted the sampling frames so subsequent requests targeted only those who had not communicated with us. Further follow-up e-mails were issued a second, third, and fourth time at approximately monthly intervals; the fifth and final reminders were sent at the end of March 2010 and the collection window closed a month later.

After bad addresses were removed from the sampling frame, we sent 2,025 email invitations to the law enforcement sample and received 414 replies (20.4% response rate). A portion of these replies were not included in the analysis that follows because a respondent either left all survey cells blank or responded with not applicable. Although it was clear in the survey letter that we wanted their general impressions about intelligence practices in their organization, these respondents were no longer working in an official intelligence capacity and decided to not

provide such input. For the fusion center sample, 772 email invitations were sent, and 96 were completed surveys were returned (12.4% response rate).

The response rate was lower than expected. In order to learn why the response rates were not higher, the research team conducted follow-up telephone interviews with 100 randomly selected participants from the law enforcement sample. Among the key reasons that were consistently reported for not responding were:

1. Job responsibilities. A number of individuals stated that they had been reassigned or promoted and no longer worked in the intelligence function. As a result they either felt the survey no longer applied to them or they were not familiar with current activities in the intelligence function.
2. The survey length. In order to fully explore the nature of and challenges to law enforcement intelligence work, both surveys asked respondents more than 100 questions. Feedback suggests individuals were uncomfortable committing to this task, especially when they were at work. As one informant remarked, "Thirty minutes is too long, there's no way I have time to take a survey for half an hour – we're under massive pressure as it is."
3. One response per agency. Several individuals declined because they knew a colleague from the same agency had already responded. One person even indicated his work group had instituted an informal policy whereby they only respond to one survey per week and this task is rotated around the group. While it is possible to control for a limited number of responses when departments are small, it becomes problematic in the case of larger organizations and fusion centers.

4. Security. A handful of individuals were concerned about the security implications of sharing information about intelligence activities outside of the law enforcement community.

Despite the low response rates, the present study provides value because there has been so little research on this topic and thus this study provides some of the first empirical insights into several critical intelligence issues. However, because we are unable to detect the nature of the response bias, the results should be accepted with caution and highlight the need for future research on this topic. We discuss the implications of these limitations in more detail in the final section.

We examine four critical issues related to the current state of law enforcement intelligence. First, staff attitudes toward preparedness for terrorist and other types of criminal events are examined. Second, staff knowledge of key intelligence mandates is assessed. Third, the knowledge and understanding of the intelligence-led policing concept is discussed. Fourth, we examine which organizations are relied on for intelligence information and how satisfied respondents are with their relationships with these sources. Where applicable, comparisons are drawn from the fusion center respondents to all other law enforcement respondents, as well as by the administrator, supervisor, investigator and analysts in state, local, and tribal agencies.

Table 1 displays descriptive information for the state, local, and tribal law enforcement agencies represented in the current study. The median agency size is 276 total sworn and non-sworn personnel while the majority of agencies were located in the Midwest region of the United States, followed closely by the Southeast and Northwest. Respondents are mostly investigators and administrators who have been employed by their agency for more than 15 years. The survey

instrument did not include a variable to identify jurisdictional responsibility (e.g. county or municipal).

[Table 1 approximately here]

Table 2 displays descriptive information of the fusion centers represented in the current study. The majority (52%) of the fusion centers in the sample consider their center to focus on "all-crimes, all-threats, all-hazards" – implying a diverse set of intelligence-related operations which go beyond the scope of terrorism. Most of the fusion centers become operational within six years of the study being conducted (66%). This is not surprising as the formal guidelines to establish a fusion center were not published by the U.S. Department of Justice until 2005. Administrators and supervisors were the two predominant positions identified by respondents. This is to be expected as upper-level management were the personnel selected to represent the fusion center at the National Fusion Center Conference. Lastly, most respondents (41%) indicated they had been assigned to their fusion center for one to three years at the time of being surveyed. Given the nature of turn-over within fusion centers as agencies rotate personnel in and out on temporary duty assignments, this is not outside the norm. One might argue that personnel who have only been assigned to the fusion center for one to three years may not be cognizant of the practices of their respective fusion center. However, personnel selected to be assigned to the fusion center are typically well-versed in law enforcement intelligence operations prior to be assigned to the center.

[Table 2 approximately here]

FINDINGS

ATTITUDES TOWARD AGENCY PREPAREDNESS

The awareness of threats for purposes of preventing terrorism and crime is at the heart of law enforcement information sharing. Table 3 provides information about agency preparedness. The first two items focused on understanding the threats existing in their region as well as their agency's preparation in responding to these threats. The results are insightful. A majority (63.5%) of the SLT respondents thought their agencies were either very aware or aware of the threats facing their region with little variation when comparing the responses by position within the agency (e.g., administrator, supervisor, investigator, and analyst). In contrast, a significantly higher percentage of the fusion center (FC) respondents (over 94 percent) said that they were very aware or aware of such threats facing their region. This finding is not surprising given the role of fusion centers within the greater law enforcement intelligence landscape. Designed to serve as a lynchpin for information sharing, and more specifically analysis, fusion centers are tasked with the responsibility of identifying regional threats and facilitating awareness of potential threats to their SLT peers. As such, it is both expected and welcomed, that fusion center respondents indicated being more aware of threats. Similarly, nearly 43 percent of the SLT respondents stated that their agency was very prepared or prepared for the threats in their region (an almost equal number stated that they were somewhat prepared), but a significantly higher percentage--over 67 percent--of the FC respondents said they were very prepared or prepared for homeland security threats. In addition, when comparing the SLT responses by position in the organization, the responding analysts were much more likely to say that the organization was very prepared or prepared. Over 66 percent of the analysts said that the

organization was prepared or very prepared compared to 46 percent of administrators, 33 percent of supervisors, and 36 percent of investigators. Thus, although the FC respondents and analysts thought that their agencies were prepared for the threats in their region; other SLT personnel did not feel as strongly about their agency's preparation.

[Table 3 approximately here]

The results in Table 3 also illustrate that there is widespread agreement that the law enforcement community has a long way to go in building an intelligence capacity - a conclusion indicated by the respondents from both survey samples. Less than ten percent of the SLT respondents thought their agency was far along in developing and maintaining a law enforcement intelligence capacity, 13 percent strongly agreed they had the capacity to identify the characteristics of events that represent the indicators or precursors of threats, and only 17 percent thought their agency provides actionable intelligence in a timely manner. Only 15 percent of the FC respondents thought they were very far along in developing and maintaining an intelligence capacity, 19 percent strongly agreed they had the capacity to identify the characteristics of events that represent indicators and/or precursors of threats, and nearly 18 percent strongly agreed that the fusion center provides intelligence in a timely manner. While it is not surprising, very few SLT respondents or FC respondents thought they had a sufficient number of staff to achieve their organization's intelligence mission. Finally, for SLT respondents, less than 17 percent reported that FC products provided content to aid in the prevention of crime. Thus, these responses suggest increased awareness and preparedness but with considerable work to do in building law enforcement intelligence capability.

KNOWLEDGE OF KEY INTELLIGENCE MANDATES

An organization's ability to engage in post-9/11 information sharing efforts relies on an understanding of contemporary practice. Such an understanding has been found to increase local law enforcement's homeland security preparedness (Burruss, Giblin, & Schafer, 2010). Table 4 presents findings related to knowledge of key intelligence mandates. The results from this table also support the conclusion that building an intelligence capacity for both FCs and SLT agencies is a work in progress and very few respondents think their agency has reached optimum levels.The state, local, and tribal respondents were very familiar or somewhat familiar with the National Criminal Intelligence Sharing Plan (64.8%) and the intelligence-led policing concept (70.4%), but they were much less familiar with the Department of Homeland Security's Target Capability List (37.7%). There was not much variation in the responses to this general awareness of these mandates when comparing the different roles of the respondents. With 70 to 88 percent responding affirmatively, fusion center respondents were significantly more likely to be very or somewhat familiar with the National Criminal Intelligence Sharing Plan, the Target Capability List, and the intelligence-led policing concept compared to the SLT respondents.

[Table 4 approximately here]

It is interesting the respondents agreed that, although they were generally familiar with the National Criminal Intelligence Sharing Plan, the Target Capability list, and intelligence-led policing, that they have yet to put these mandates into practice. Only nine percent of the SLT

respondents said that their agency's intelligence function follows the National Criminal Intelligence Sharing Plan and just six percent said it aligns with the Target Capability List. Nineteen percent of the FC respondents said that their organization's intelligence function followed the National Criminal Intelligence Sharing Plan recommendations and over seven percent said that it aligns with the Target Capability List.

INTELLIGENCE-LED POLICING

As discussed, the demand for intelligence-led policing has come from a variety of government recommendations, reports, and mandates. Moreover, government funding has provided incentives for agencies to adopt intelligence-led policing to explore its different applications - such as the Bureau of Justice Assistance's "Targeting Violent Crime Initiative" (TVCI). As seen in Table 5, very few of the agencies surveyed, however, have implemented intelligence-led policing. On average, only 18.6 percent of the SLT respondents said that their agency had adopted intelligence-led policing. Analysts were somewhat more likely than administrators, supervisors, and investigators to believe their organization had adopted ILP. In contrast, FC respondentsindicated their organization had adopted ILP. Not only did a significantly higher percentage of FC respondents indicate their organization had adopted ILP, they were also somewhat more likely to believe that it was an effective strategy. Over 37 percent of the FC respondents indicated that ILP would be very effective in their organization. Although investigators and analysts were somewhat more optimistic about the effectiveness of ILP in their agency, less than 30 percent of all SLT respondents thought ILP functioned very effectively in their agency.

[Table 5 approximately here]

A recent study of intelligence-led policing implementation found that both familiarity with, and commitment to, the ILP concept increased the likelihood of successful implementation (Carter, 2011). The respondents from both surveys indicated that most analysts and other personnel in their organization were not familiar with the ILP concept. Only 14 percent of the SLT respondents strongly agreed that analysts were very familiar with the ILP concept and just over three percent said that other personnel in the organization were very familiar with this concept. Although the percentages were significantly higher when examining the FC responses, just over 28 percent strongly agreed that analysts in the fusion center were familiar and over 18 percent strongly agreed that other personnel in the organization were familiar with the ILP concept.

Critical to the promotion of this concept are the attitudes of the chief executive about the adoption of ILP - without commitment from command staff it is unlikely that ILP will have much of an impact on organizational processes. It appears the FC respondents thought chief executives were much more supportive of the ILP concept. Fifty-one percent of these respondents strongly agreed their chief executive supports ILP. In contrast, just over 23 percent of the SLT respondents strongly agreed the chief executive supports ILP.

INFORMATION SHARING

One of the key elements to the successful use of intelligence for prevention is widespread information sharing. According to the Information Sharing Environment Implementation Plan, "Strengthening our nation's ability to share terrorism information constitutes a cornerstone of our

national strategy to protect the American people and our institutions and to defeat terrorists and their support networks at home and abroad" (McNamara, 2006: p. xiii). Similarly, the President's National Strategy for Information Sharing (2007, p. 1) states, "Our success in preventing future terrorist attacks depends upon our ability to gather, analyze, and share information on intelligence regarding those who want to attack us, the tactics they use, and the targets that they intend to attack." Organizations and individuals must know how to identify relevant threat information, collect it without violating civil liberties, know who the information should be shared with, and must be willing to share it. Although the successful prevention of crime and terrorism relies on many organizations sharing information, SLT law enforcement agencies play a particularly important role for identifying and intervening in domestic threats. Moreover, although state and major urban area fusion centers have provided a vehicle to perhaps enhance the flow of local intelligence, these centers are still in development with little empirically known about their information sharing relationships with other agencies. Considering that information sharing among law enforcement agencies has historically been a problematic issue, there is reason to predict that agencies will be less than satisfied with the level of information sharing that is occurring.

The Nature of Relationships Among Agencies

A willingness on behalf of law enforcement agencies to engage with peer organizations has been found to facilitate information sharing (Carter, 2011). Table 6 provides the results from asking about the likelihood respondents would contact various agencies for intelligence and threat-related information. The results are provided for all FC respondents, all SLT respondents in general and SLT administrators, supervisors, investigators, and analysts more specifically.

Both SLT and FC respondents were similarly likely to heavily rely on others within their own agency when having questions about intelligence issues. Over 66 percent of the SLT respondents and over 76 percent of the FC respondents indicated they were very likely to consult other staff in their own agency. Close to or more than half of both the SLT and FC respondents were very likely to consult the FBI, state or local law enforcement agencies, and experts in the field. Both SLT and FC respondents were less likely to consult government officials and government attorneys.

The data presented in Table 6 are interesting for two additional reasons. First, in general, similar percentages of SLT and FC respondents were very likely to consult the same sources when they have intelligence-related questions, although FC respondents indicated that they were very likely to use a few sources more frequently. For example, a significantly higher percentage of FC respondents indicated they were very likely to consult other federal law enforcement agencies and experts in the field. Only about 29 percent of the SLT respondents were very likely to consult other fusion centers on intelligence issues compared to over 61 percent of the FC respondents. Intuitively this makes sense, but it also provides evidence related to the structure of intelligence sharing and that fusion centers appear to have open lines of communication. Thus, fusion centers would be expected to, in turn, push any intelligence received from other fusion centers throughout their states. Indeed, this empirically supports the rationale on which the development of fusion centers was based. Second, SLT administrators, supervisors, investigators, and analysts appeared to use these sources similarly with just one exception. State, local, and tribal analysts were somewhat less likely to say they would consult the FBI on intelligence issues compared to supervisors and investigators and much less likely compared to administrators.

[Table 6 approximately here]

Satisfaction with Relationships

The relationships law enforcement organizations have among themselves and other community organizations is critical to the success of information sharing. If relationships are poor, or non-existent, active engagement among those organizations that have information and those who need it is unlikely to occur. Table 7 presents the results on respondents' evaluation of their satisfaction with how their agency relates to other agencies. These results are interesting especially when contrasted with the previous findings. In general, only a modest number of SLT and FC respondents were very satisfied with their relationship with the agencies noted and there was not much variation when comparing the two groups. For example, approximately 20 percent of SLT and FC respondents were very satisfied with their relationship with the FBI, other federal law enforcement agencies, and emergency management personnel. A somewhat higher percentage of both SLT and FC respondents were very satisfied with their relationship with state and local law enforcement agencies. Approximately 28 percent of SLT respondents and 34 percent of the FC respondents were very satisfied with their relationship with state law enforcement agencies, and over 38 percent of the SLT and FC respondents indicated that they were very satisfied with their relationship with local law enforcement agencies. Both SLT and FC respondents were not very satisfied with their relationship with tribal law enforcement, public health, and private sector agencies, although the low responses might be linked to lack of interaction with these agencies rather than specific concerns about these relationships.

[Table 7 approximately here]

There was some variation in satisfaction with relationships when comparing across positions in the SLT agencies. For example, supervisors, investigators, and analysts were less satisfied with their relationship with the FBI compared to administrators in the sample, and supervisors and investigators were less satisfied with their relationship with other federal law enforcement compared to administrators and analysts. Supervisors, investigators, and analysts were also less likely to be satisfied with their relationship with local law enforcement, public health agencies, and emergency management agencies.

DISCUSSION

The September 11th attacks fundamentally changed the structure, expectations, and requirements of law enforcement intelligence operations. Although there have been significant changes and challenges facing the federal law enforcement community, this project focuses on what has occurred at state, local, and tribal levels. The most significant changes have been the development of new national standards and initiatives promulgated by the Global Intelligence Working Group as well as the widespread development of fusion centers. Prior to 9/11, law enforcement intelligence was largely limited to major city police departments, state police agencies and a small number of Regional Intelligence Centers that were sporadically developed on a regional basis without any type of national plan or direction. Most of these intelligence units were small, had no national direction and typically did not share much information outside of their agency (Carter, 2009). It is important to note that the present fusion center concept is in

contrast to intelligence centers prior to 9/11. While contemporary fusion centers retain criminal intelligence records[4] their key purpose is to serve as a clearinghouse to receive and analyze raw information and disseminate intelligence products to other law enforcement entities. This philosophical change, combined with the rapid emergence of fusion centers, has created an entirely different information sharing infrastructure for the law enforcement community to utilize. This expansion and its impact on local law enforcement is noted in a report recently released by DHS documenting progress made towards implementing recommendations from the 9/11 Commission Report.

Specifically, it was stated that "While fusion centers did not exist ten years ago, today there are 72 recognized fusion centers throughout the country…that are uniquely situated to empower front-line law enforcement, public safety, fire service, emergency response, public health, critical infrastructure protection, and private sector security personnel to understand local implications of national intelligence, thus enabling local officials to better protect their communities" (U.S. Department of Homeland Security, 2011, p.12). One of the underlying reasons for the creation of these fusion centers was to establish an information sharing clearinghouse for state, local, and tribal law enforcement agencies as part of the Information Sharing Environment. Such centers were designed to help tear down "silos of information" by building trust and communication channels among and between law enforcement agencies, and developing nationwide criminal information connectivity. Technology provides opportunities to collect and share mass amounts of information, but managing and making sense of the data that is available is a great challenge. The development of fusion centers were designed to help manage a growing amount of two-way SLT information sharing more effectively and efficiently.

Critical to responding to terrorism and other multi-jurisdictional crimes is local information collected from state, local, and tribal law enforcement agencies. This was demonstrated in Anarumo's (2011) survey of law enforcement executives that found significant regional differences in the nature of threat groups active in various parts of the country. Further, there are documented cases of criminal extremists having routine contact with SLT law enforcement officers that led to prevention of an attack (White, 2004), but there have also been some missed opportunities, most notably 9/11. For example, evidence has shown that terrorists commit precursor crimes that put them in contact with various law enforcement officers (Damphousse & Smith, 2004; Smith *et al*. 2002; Hamm, 2005). One concern, however, is that potentially relevant and important information is not shared and thus an opportunity to prevent a potential serious act may be missed. The new intelligence structure was designed to fix some of these gaps in information sharing. State, local, and tribal agencies have been urged to develop an intelligence capacity so they may effectively share threat information across jurisdictions as well as provide information to analysts who may more effectively define the threat picture. A significant challenge, however, is that SLT agencies must absorb the costs of building an intelligence capacity as "an unfunded mandate." The lack of dedicated resources makes the building of an effective intelligence capacity particularly challenging.

Although the federal government has provided support to build an intelligence infrastructure to more effectively respond to terrorism, there has been virtually no empirical work that describes the major issues and obstacles faced by SLT law enforcement agencies and fusion centers on intelligence-related issues. This study is a critical first step in documenting the status of the progress made accomplishing key intelligence goals, and we believe this study contributes to the knowledge of and literature pertaining to intelligence practices in the United

States. In this final section, we discuss three issues. First, we provide an overview of the key findings from the study. Second, we discuss policy implications. Third, we highlight limitations with this research and suggest future research needs.

KEY FINDINGS

This article provides an introduction to the information sharing issues faced by American law enforcement and empirically explores the extent to which these issues are present among a nationally diverse sample of state, local, and tribal law enforcement agencies and state fusion centers. We find that significant progress has been made implementing fundamental policy and procedures related to building the intelligence capacity of law enforcement and fusion center agencies since the attacks of 9/11. Respondents from both the state, local, tribal law enforcement agencies and fusion center samples indicated their agencies were familiar with intelligence guidelines and standards, had a good working knowledge of threats in their community, and have some working knowledge of intelligence-led policing. Despite the progress that has been made, however, the results also point to significant room for improvement and development. For example, although respondents indicated they were familiar with national standards and guidelines, they also expressed the belief that the policies and procedures within their agency have yet to align with these requirements. Similarly, the respondents noted they were aware of threats in their jurisdictions, but identified a need to build a capacity to better identify these threats and noted shortages in resources and personnel in accomplishing these goals.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The status of law enforcement intelligence in SLT agencies appears to be similar to the early development of other innovations in policing, such as community- and problem-oriented policing during the early 1990s. Law enforcement officers and executives recognize the importance of intelligence yet the implementation of law enforcement intelligence remains inconsistent and largely unknown a decade after 9/11. Several factors may contribute to this. First, the philosophical underpinnings of law enforcement intelligence were significantly changed and broadened, hence a resocialization process among intelligence personnel had to occur. At a minimum, such a process includes learning new policies, philosophies, regulations and a lexicon of contemporary terminology. Second, while the 9/11 attacks remain the benchmark for change, in reality new standards – such as the National Criminal Intelligence Sharing Plan and training programs - did not emerge until 2003. Moreover, new standards and directions continue to evolve even at the time of this writing. Third, it simply takes time to develop new organizations such as fusion centers and get them at an operational level. Similarly, training and developing new policies in America's roughly 16,000 law enforcement agencies is a massive task, particularly when new processes – such as participation in a fusion center – must be marketed and sold to agencies as a wise investment in resources.

Inconsistent development and continued evolution is even more the exception rather than the rule when considering the intelligence-led policing philosophy. Although respondents were familiar with the term ILP, the results suggest most agencies are at an early stage of implementation. Indeed, there are different conceptual understandings of ILP and different visions of the role ILP should hold in law enforcement organizations. Like the community policing movement, these results reveal clear needs for training, commitment of resources and addressing the tension between specialization and generalization. Additionally, the goal of

increasing an intelligence capacity and adopting ILP comes at a time when SLT agencies operate under significant budgetary constraints. Finally, results suggest the potential for fusion centers to serve a critical role in the continued development of intelligence capacities within local agencies.

Although the results of this study point to clear progress with respect to the development of law enforcement's intelligence structure, they also reveal challenges. Clearly, there is a need for the commitment of resources in the form of personnel and training. Given the fragmented and decentralized structure of law enforcement in the U.S., it is critical that mid- to large agencies have analysts who can conduct local level analysis as well as push information and intelligence to fusion centers. Small agencies need to have intelligence liaison officers who can serve as "nodes" in the intelligence network. This requires commitment of resources at a time when many agencies are not hiring or even cutting personnel. Law enforcement executives as well as policymakers at local, state, and federal levels will need to consider the implications of these budgetary issues. While many executives acknowledge the use of analysts make the agency "work smarter", thereby having a great effect on crime and community order, it remains a difficult concept to sell to the public and politicians.

Law enforcement executives also need to seriously consider and resolve several issues related to specialization and generalization. At one level is the issue of whether the intelligence capacity is viewed as specifically focused on homeland security and the threat of terrorism or whether it is viewed as building an "all-crimes, all-hazards" capacity. On the one hand, the need to develop a capacity and expertise focused on terrorism can justify a more specialized focus. As the commander of a local police department intelligence unit told us, "what keeps me awake is missing a tip or lead suggesting an Al Qaeda-type attack." On the other hand, the results of this

study, combined with prior studies, suggest the potential impact of the "all-crimes, all-hazards" focus. Prior research demonstrates the high level involvement of terrorist groups in a variety of criminal activity that brings these individuals in contact with SLT agencies (Damphousse & Smith, 2004; Smith *et al*. 2002; Hamm, 2005). The present study indicates a high proportion of suspicious activity reports involving all-crimes. These results suggest the continued evolution and use of SLT law enforcement information sharing networks[5], linked to fusion centers and federal law enforcement will be best served through the all-crimes, all-hazards information flow. Additionally, it strikes us that the costs of the investment in an intelligence capacity will yield the greatest benefits for SLT agencies when the capacity equips such agencies to address not only terrorism, but a range of criminal threats (e.g., organized crime, gangs, violent crime, drugs).

A parallel question of specialization and generalization relates to training and responsibilities within SLT agencies. On the basis of these findings, it appears that most agencies to date have developed an intelligence capacity through training officers and analysts dedicated, or at least focused on, intelligence assignments. Thus, the respondents to our surveys indicate a fairly high level of knowledge and expertise themselves, but report much lower levels of familiarity throughout the organization. Again, this is similar to early stages of community- and problem-oriented policing when specialist officers were tasked with implementation, but the majority of officers and supervisors focused on so-called "real policing." The danger is that the intelligence function becomes a specialized function divorced from the larger organization; what Toch and Grant (1991) once referred to as an "innovation ghetto." The risk is that information flow from street-level officers and investigators to analysts does not occur. Similarly, analysts

do not fully understand the needs of officers and investigators. This, too, suggests the need for broad training on the intelligence function, the role of analysts, and ILP.[6]

The development of a national network of 72 fusion centers represents a significant undertaking and achievement. Yet, there has been criticism of fusion centers in two broad areas: Fusion center operations (Masse, O'Neil, and Rollins, 2007) and the protection of civil liberties (German, Undated). With respect to operations, there is often a misconception that fusion centers are federal entities under the direction of the Department of Homeland Security. Rather, all 72 fusion centers are constituted through state and local government authority with boards of directors drawn from the local community. On the matter of civil liberties, all fusion centers have privacy policies and have received extensive training on privacy, civil rights and civil liberties. While fusion center directors feel confident about the civil rights protections in their operations, civil libertarians remain skeptical.

The results of the current study suggest that fusion centers are playing a critical role in the nation's domestic intelligence capacity and could play an even more important role in the future. The co-location of personnel from SLT, federal law enforcement and, in some cases, the private sector appears to mitigate some of the historic, cultural, and organizational barriers to information sharing. Consequently, fusion centers occupy an organizational or network "space" that is "closer" to both federal law enforcement and the SLTs. They appear to be a critical network "node" for the movement of information and intelligence "up-from" and "back-to" the local level.

FUTURE RESEARCH

There are two noteworthy trends that have emerged since the data were collected in this study. The first is a maturation of intelligence-related initiatives, which includes policy refinements and training that has occurred since the data were collected.[7] Second is an expansion of the intelligence capacity in agencies that previously did not have one.[8] These transitions certainly pose significant challenges for a building intelligence capacity as there is a steep learning curve for understanding policy issues, civil rights concerns, and information sharing opportunities that have to be understood. However given such circumstances, the responses that comprise the present study are thought to be the most valid from the available population of key personnel.

Identifying people who work in the expanding arena of law enforcement intelligence in diverse law enforcement agencies is a difficult sampling frame to capture. Our sample was convenient—we were able to obtain email addresses from national training program on intelligence issues and from a conference that included fusion center representatives. Hence, while not perfect, the approach taken in this study is perhaps the best available but the generalizability of the findings is limited. Even with the best sampling frame available and a robust follow-up the low response rate presented a challenge for the current study. Although multiple efforts were made to contact respondents and encourage participation, it was still difficult to increase the response rate. The length of the survey was certainly an issue as not only was there over 100 questions asked, but many of the questions had 20-25 response options. In addition, because of the turnover and the fact that multiple personnel were selected from a single agency, often a single respondent completed the survey on behalf of the agency. A major concern with the low responses is that it was impossible for us to know whether the nonresponses were random as we were unable to document the direction of the response bias.

The sample was pulled from email contact lists that did not include any other descriptive information. We do suspect, however, based on the random sample of interviews that we did to detect why respondents did not complete the survey, that although the potential for nonresponse bias exists that those completing the survey were significantly invested in the intelligence practices of their agency. The motivation to response was to share their knowledge about intelligence practices because they were fully engaged in such practices in their agency.

The length of the survey—which contributed to the low response rates--provided us with rich context on a wide variety of critical intelligence issues from those actively engaged in those issues, and the results, although exploratory, provide an empirical introduction to intelligence practices in the United States.

Although this study provides some keen insights into the status of intelligence practices in the United States, it is an exploratory study and there remains a significant need for additional research to better understand the transition to integrating intelligence work into strategic and tactical decision making. While previous research has found no evidence to suggest the size of an agency helps to explain intelligence practices of the organization (Carter, 2011), further research is necessary to more closely examine such a relationship. More specifically, rather than focusing measurement on the size of agency, it is more appropriate to also account for the geographic proximity of the agency relative to a major urban area. Research has found that small agencies (fewer than nine sworn officers), that are located in close proximity to major urban areas are more likely to have a robust homeland security preparedness capability (Schafer *et al*, 2009). Related to this issue, there should be a significant commitment to more completely examine the work of state and major urban area fusion centers, their relationships with SLT and

federal law enforcement agencies, and how to most effectively share information across institutions.

NOTES

1. Since many of the changes in law enforcement intelligence did not occur until 2003 or after, the true growth of fusion centers did not begin until around 2004-05, it is not surprising that there is little scientific research.
2. Many of these changes are continuing to evolve at the time of this paper.
3. The National Fusion Center Conference is sponsored by the following agencies: Bureau of Justice Assistance, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ), U.S. Department of Homeland Security, DOJ's Global Justice Information Sharing Initiative, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Office of the Director of National Intelligence, Office of the Program Manager, Information Sharing Environment, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services.
4. As a result of funding requirements, all fusion center criminal intelligence records systems follow federal guidelines (28 CFR Part 23) and they must have an approved privacy policy that meets the Information Sharing Environment privacy guidelines.
5. SLT law enforcement networks for intelligence and information sharing are (1) the Regional Information Sharing System network (RISS.net); (2) the FBI's Law Enforcement Online (LEO); and (3) the DHS Homeland Security Information Network-Intelligence (HSIN-Intel).
6. The Global Intelligence Working Group has developed the "Minimum Criminal Intelligence Training Standards" which include training guidelines for line level officers.

7. The Nationwide Suspicious Activity Reporting Initiative is an example.

8. This is demonstrated in the Bureau of Justice Assistance Targeting Violent Crime Initiative.

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Table 1. Law Enforcement Sample Descriptives (*n* = 345)

	Median (Mean)
Agency Size	276 (1341)
	Valid Percent (*n*)
Agency Region	
Northeast	22% (77)
Southeast	23% (80)
Midwest	27% (91)
Southwest	11% (37)
West	17% (60)
Respondent's Position	
Administrator	29% (100)
Supervisor	23% (81)
Investigator	32% (110)
Analyst	16% (54)
Respondent Years at Agency	
Less than 1 Year	.3% (1)
1-3 Years	6% (20)
4-9 Years	18% (64)
10-15 Years	21% (73)
More than 15 Years	55% (187)

Table 2. Fusion Center Sample Descriptives (*n* = 96)

	Valid Percent(*n*)
Focus of Fusion Center	
Terrorism Only	5% (5)
"All-Crimes"	29% (28)
"All-Crimes, All-threats, All-Hazards"	52% (50)
Not Specified	14% (13)
Age of Fusion Center	
1-3 Years	39% (36)
4-6 Years	27% (26)
7 or More Years	17% (16)
Not Specified	17% (16)
Respondent's Position	
Administrator	51% (49)
Supervisor	20% (19)
Investigator	8% (7)
Analyst	10% (10)
Not Specified	11% (11)
Respondent Years at Fusion Center	
Less than 1 Year	10% (10)
1-3 Years	41% (39)
4-9 Years	27% (26)
10-15 Years	3% (3)
More than 15 Years	2% (2)
Not Specified	17% (16)

Table 3. Attitudes Towards Agency Preparedness

Question	Fusion Center	SLT	Administration[5]	Supervisor[5]	Investigator[5]	Analyst[5]
Agency aware of threats[1]	93.8%* (90)	63.5% (219)	6.9% (238)	63.2% (218)	57.4% (198)	70.4% (243)
Agency prepared for threats[2]	67.7%* (65)	42.6% (147)	46.1% (159)	32.5% (112)	35.7% (123)	66.1% (228)
Far along is agency in having an intelligence capacity[3]	14.6%* (14)	9.3% (32)	8.4% (29)	6.7% (23)	7.0% (24)	16.5% (57)
Agency has sufficient staff[4]	1.0%** (1)	2.9% (10)	1.4% (5)	1.2% (4)	4.1% (14)	2.9% (10)
Agency has capacity to identify threats[4]	18.8%* (18)	13.3% (46)	14.5% (50)	16.8% (58)	7.2% (25)	18.6% (64)
Agency provides timely intell[4]	17.7%* (17)	16.8% (58)	16.5% (57)	19.1% (66)	12.8% (44)	24.1% (83)
Fusion center products have content to aid in prevention of crime[4]	NA	16.8% (58)	17.7% (61)	20.0% (69)	12.8% (44)	18.0% (62)

[1] Very aware/aware; [2] Very prepared/prepared; [3] Very far; [4] Strongly Agree, [5]SLT sample
*.001, **.05

Table 4. Respondent Knowledge of Key Intelligence Mandates

Question	Fusion Center	SLT	Administrator[3]	Supervisor[3]	Investigator[3]	Analyst[3]
Familiar with NCISP[1]	88.5%* (85)	64.8% (220)	65.5% (226)	57.7% (199)	68.1% (235)	60.3% (208)
Familiar with TCL[1]	72.9%* (70)	37.7% (130)	40.3% (139)	44.9% (155)	31.0% (107)	34.5% (119)
Familiar with ILP[1]	86.5%** (83)	70.4% (243)	70.4% (243)	65.5% (226)	68.1% (235)	79.1% (273)
Agency follows NCISP recs[2]	18.8%* (18)	9.3% (32)	3.5% (12)	11.9% (41)	10.1% (35)	15.4% (53)
Agency aligns with TCL[2]	7.3%* (7)	5.8% (20)	3.5% (12)	5.2% (18)	6.7% (23)	4.1% (14)

[1]Very familiar/familiar; [2]Completely, [3]SLT sample
*.001, **.05

Table 5. Understanding of Intelligence-Led Policing

Question	Fusion Center	SLT	Administrator[3]	Supervisor[3]	Investigator[3]	Analyst[3]
Agency Adopted ILP	29.2%** (28)	18.6% (64)	16.8% (58)	11.9% (41)	20.0% (69)	26.4% (91)
ILP effective in agency[1]	37.5% (36)	28.1% (97)	20.0% (69)	24.9% (86)	39.4% (136)	33.3% (115)
Agency chief exec supports ILP[2]	51.0%* (49)	23.1% (80)	28.1% (97)	21.2% (73)	17.4% (60)	31.6% (109)
Analysts in agency familiar with ILP[2]	28.1%* (27)	13.9% (48)	10.4% (36)	13.6% (47)	14.5% (50)	20.0% (69)
Personnel in agency familiar with ILP[2]*	18.8%* (18)	3.2% (11)	2.6% (9)	2.6% (9)	3.2% (11)	6.1% (21)

[1] Very Effective; [2] Very familiar/familiar, [3]SLT sample
*.001, **.05

Table 6. Consults Other Agencies on Intelligence and Threat Issues

Agency	Fusion Center	SLT	Administrator[1]	Supervisor[1]	Investigator[1]	Analyst[1]
FBI	57.3% (55)	47.8% (165)	60.6% (209)	48.7% (168)	40.3% (139)	35.7% (123)
State FC	NA	45.2% (156)	50.4% (174)	40.9% (141)	39.4% (136)	50.7% (175)
Other State FC	61.5% (59)	28.7% (99)	29.0% (100)	32.2% (111)	22.6% (78)	32.8% (113)
Other Fed LEA	46.9%* (45)	42.6% (147)	47.0% (162)	40.6% (140)	42.9% (148)	34.5% (119)
State LEA	60.4% (58)	53.9% (186)	56.8% (196)	54.2% (187)	52.8% (182)	50.1% (173)
Other Local LEA	56.3% (54)	59.7% (206)	64.6% (223)	60.3% (208)	57.7% (199)	52.5% (181)
Other Staff in Agency	76.0% (73)	66.7% (230)	71.3% (246)	67.8% (234)	60.6% (209)	6.4% (22)
Govt Officials	31.3%* (30)	33.3% (115)	37.4% (129)	31.6% (109)	28.7% (99)	34.5% (119)
Govt Attorneys	32.3% (31)	22.9 (79)	26.1% (90)	21.2% (73)	22.0% (76)	18.6% (64)
Experts in Field	63.5%* (61)	44.9% (155)	49.0% (169)	39.1% (135)	48.4% (167)	45.5% (157)

[1]SLT sample
*.001, **.05

Table 7. Satisfaction with Relationships

Agency	Fusion Center	SLT	Administrator[2]	Supervisor[2]	Investigator[2]	Analyst[2]
FBI[1]	19.8% (19)	20.6% (71)	28.7% (99)	18.3% (63)	15.7% (54)	16.8% (58)
Other Fed LEA	18.8% (18)	16.5% (57)	21.7% (75)	9.0% (31)	12.5% (43)	20.0% (69)
State FC	NA	22.3% (77)	24.1% (83)	18.8% (65)	22.0% (76)	25.8% (89)
State LEA	34.4% (33)	27.8% (96)	29.9% (103)	29.0% (100)	22.0% (76)	34.8% (120)
Local LEA	38.5% (37)	38.0% (131)	44.3% (153)	32.8% (113)	36.5% (124)	36.8% (127)
Tribal LEA**	4.2% (4)	4.9% (17)	6.1% (21)	1.2% (4)	2.6% (9)	11.0% (38)
Private Sector	10.4% (10)	7.0% (24)	9.3% (32)	8.4% (29)	4.6% (16)	6.1% (21)
Public Health	15.6% (15)	9.6% (33)	18.6% (64)	4.9% (17)	6.4% (22)	6.1% (21)
Emergency Management	22.9% (22)	17.7% (61)	29.9% (103)	9.6% (33)	14.8% (51)	11.0% (38)

[1] Very Satisfied, [2]SLT sample
*.001, **.05

Appendix 1. Survey Questions Organized by Table

Table 3. Attitudes Towards Agency Preparedness

- In your opinion, how aware is your agency of homeland security threats facing your region?
- In your opinion, how prepared is your organization for homeland security threats in your region?
- In your opinion, how far along is your agency in developing and maintaining a criminal intelligence capacity?
- We have a sufficient number of staff to achieve our agency's intelligence capacity mission.
- Our agency has the capacity to identify the characteristics or events that represent indicators and / or precursors of threats.
- Our agency provides actionable intelligence in a timely manner to those constituents responsible for implementing prevention, protection, response and consequence management.

Table 4. Respondent Knowledge of Key Intelligence Mandates

- How familiar are you with the National Criminal Intelligence Sharing Plan (NCISP)?
- How familiar are you with the intelligence components of the Department of Homeland Security Target Capability List (TCL)?
- How familiar are you with the Intelligence-Led Policing (ILP) concept?
- Does your agency's intelligence function follow the NCISP recommendations?
- Does your agency's intelligence function align with the TCL?

Table 5. Understanding of Intelligence-Led Policing

- Has your agency adopted ILP?
- How effective is ILP in your agency?
- The chief executive of the agency supports ILP.
- Most of the analysts in the agency are familiar with the ILP concept.
- Most of the personnel in this agency are familiar with the ILP concept.

Table 6. Consults Other Agencies on Intelligence and Threat Issues

- What is the likelihood that you will consult representatives from the following agencies for questions / concerns about intelligence issues?
    - FBI
    - State Fusion Center
    - Other State Fusion Center
    - Other Federal Law Enforcement Agencies
    - State Law Enforcement Agencies

- Other Local Law Enforcement Agencies
- Other Staff in the Agency
- Government Officials
- Government Attorneys
- Experts in the Field

Table 7. Satisfaction with Relationships

- How satisfied are you in the relationship you have with the FBI?
- How satisfied are you in the relationship you have with the other Federal law enforcement agencies in your state?
- How satisfied are you in the relationship you have with the state fusion center?
- How satisfied are you in the relationship you have with the state law enforcement agencies in your state?
- How satisfied are you in the relationship you have with the other local law enforcement agencies in your state?
- How satisfied are you in the relationship you have with the tribal law enforcement agencies in your state?
- How satisfied are you in the relationship you have with the private sector in your state?
- How satisfied are you in the relationship you have with the public health officials in your state?
- How satisfied are you in the relationship you have with the emergency management personnel in your state?